

O 110402Z JUL 08
FM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7543
INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE
NSC WASHINGTON DC
CIA WASHDC
JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L PESHAWAR 000396

E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/11/2018
TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: NWFP: STANDOFF AT HANGU POLICE STATION

REF: PESHAWAR 384

CLASSIFIED BY: Michael A. Via, Acting Principal Officer,
Consulate Peshawar, State.
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

Summary

1. (C) A brief militant "siege" at a police station in the Northwest Frontier Province's (NWFP) Hangu district has dispersed after 200 Pakistani Army troops were deployed to the region. Approximately 20 government officials remain in militant captivity and negotiations are underway to secure their release. The stakes are high in this effort by the GOP to secure the troubled settled/tribal divide as memories of recent militant incursions into the settled areas are still fresh in the minds of locals. End Summary.

Standoff in Hangu

2. (C) Militants surrounded a police station in the NWFP's Hangu district on July 9 and demanded that police release seven of their associates who had been arrested earlier in Doaba. Contacts at 11th Corps told ODRP/Peshawar that 200 Army troops had been deployed to Doaba on July 9 to "reinforce local security forces and return stability to the area." While militants have dispersed and there have been no reports of casualties during the standoff, approximately 20 police officers and other government officials were abducted during the siege and remain in militant captivity.

3. (C) Hangu's district Nazim (Mayor) confirmed on July 10 that negotiations led by the Regional Coordination Officer (a senior bureaucrat responsible for several NWFP districts) are underway to secure the release of the kidnapped officials. The militants have demanded the release of their seven colleagues arrested on July 9. The Nazim stated that religious leaders are being used as intermediaries between the government officials and militants, which he described simply as "taliban." (Note: Local observers comment that Hangu is within Baitullah Mehsud's sphere of influence. End note.)

Hangu Heating Up

4. (C) Hangu based contacts note that the security situation in the district has deteriorated over recent months. Militant spillover from Kurram's ongoing sectarian conflict and Darra Adamkhel's growing lawlessness has led to a perception among

residents in Hangu that the government is not responding quickly enough. Roads leading in and out of Hangu have been regular targets for both kidnappings and sectarian violence. In June alone, at least 14 people, mostly government workers, were kidnapped. Locals say that they feel "isolated" due to difficulties traveling in and out of the agency. Contacts based in Hangu report that "Taliban" are now roaming freely in the district.

Comment

15. (C) The stakes are high in this most recent attempt by the GOP to reinforce its influence on the troubled tribal/settled divide. Memories of the government's slow response to Baitullah Mehsud's June 23 occupation of Jandola in Frontier Region Tank and the subsequent execution of 23 tribal elders (reftel) are still fresh in the minds of locals on the Kohat/Hangu border. They are beginning to doubt the GOP's ability or willingness to assist them if they stand up to militant advances.

VIA